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PORUGAL

The heated denial by Portuguese Prime Minister Goncalves' office yesterday that he had resigned may mean that he has refused to give up in the face of extreme pressure. If so, the battle for political dominance could expand with dramatic suddenness into a clash within the military.

Usually well-informed US embassy sources supported press speculation earlier yesterday that Goncalves had resigned. Reports reaching the embassy suggested Goncalves had deferred to President Costa Gomes, who was to form a government that would include four or five deputy prime ministers, with Goncalves in a minor role. Embassy sources indicated that the Socialists and the center-left Popular Democratic Party would be asked to join the cabinet. The Prime Minister's office branded these reports lies and said Goncalves would form a government later this week.

Last night, Goncalves received support from several dozen officers at the general headquarters of the Lisbon Military Region who endorsed his continued role as prime minister. The Lisbon Military Region, however, is not typical of the armed forces as a whole, where anti-Goncalves sentiment is reportedly growing.

Tension, meanwhile, increased in the conservative north of Portugal yesterday, when two anti-communist demonstrators were killed by an army captain. The shootings occurred in Famalicao, where the local Communist headquarters was razed by demonstrators. The demonstrators were reportedly assisted by some members of the security forces.

The Communists—apparently attempting to divert attention from the groundswell of anti-communist sentiment—blamed this and similar incidents on the Portuguese Liberation Army, a group of conservative Portuguese dissidents believed headquartered in Spain.

Communist Party leader Alvaro Cunhal's growing concern over the attacks was reflected in a speech in the Communist stronghold of Evora on Sunday. Cunhal appealed for support from the far left, called for unity in the face of a "mounting counter-revolutionary threat," and warned that groups on the far left would be the next to be attacked. Some far left parties have openly sided with the Socialist and Popular Democratic parties and are bitter enemies of the Communists.

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A church demonstration in the north on Sunday further increased pressure both on the Communists and the Armed Forces Movement. The bishop of Coimbra urged Catholics to become more militant in opposing efforts directed at alienating the people from their parish priests and bishops. Both the patriarch of Lisbon and the papal nuncio have told Ambassador Carlucci that the church in Portugal is determined to wage a united struggle against Movement policies which favor the Communists.

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CHINA

Recent reporting indicates that Chairman Mao Tse-tung's deteriorating health is causing Chinese officials some concern. Premier Chou En-lai appears somewhat stronger physically and continues to play an active role in major policy issues.

Communist officials in Hong Kong reportedly have begun preparing for the possibility of agitation against local British authorities in the event of Mao's death. Hong Kong communist officials are keeping a close watch on radical supporters of Mao's wife, Chiang Ching, and have reportedly transferred one of them out of the colony.

Whether the preparations in Hong Kong for Mao's death are merely a convenient excuse to crack down on radicals in the colony, there is no doubt that Mao is indeed quite ill. [REDACTED]

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Mao is not involved in day-to-day affairs but does maintain an interest in major policy issues. His wide-ranging conversation with visiting Thai Prime Minister Khukrit indicates that the Chairman is mentally alert and aware of events in other countries.

Nevertheless, Mao's physical condition has deteriorated to the point that any serious infection or stress could be fatal. In an apparent attempt to signal to the public that a leadership change could come at any time, Peking recently released televised films of an obviously aged and debilitated leader.

Chou En-lai is still playing an important leadership role. Most reports indicate that he is mentally alert and his decision-making capabilities are intact. [REDACTED]

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with 12 vice premiers to relieve him of routine activities, Chou can continue to be effective for some time. A recently released photograph of an obviously vital Chou is in marked contrast to the films of an enfeebled Mao. [REDACTED]

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PORUGAL-AZORES

Sources close to the Azorean situation estimate that nearly 80 percent of the population now supports separatism, although a large number of the people probably would not actively join a coup attempt.

A communist take-over in Portugal or a refusal by present leaders to grant greater autonomy could move the separatists to act. In such an event, there is serious doubt regarding Lisbon's ability to send an expeditionary force to the Azores.

Political factionalism and a breakdown in discipline make it uncertain whether units can be counted on to obey orders to oppose an Azorean separatist move. Furthermore, operations by mainland forces on the islands would require control of suitable airfield or port facilities. A limited air assault is possible by using the Madeira Islands as a staging point. Paratroops could be dropped in the Azores to secure an airfield large enough to allow Portuguese civilian 707 or 747 aircraft to land. Uncertain weather conditions, poor terrain, and lack of aircraft would make an air assault dangerous.

Meanwhile, the navy lacks both integral lift and the assault capability for an opposed landing in the Azores. Troops could be transported by civilian liners under contract, but their unloading and shuttling to shore would require control of port facilities.

The final decision by Lisbon's leaders to oppose Azorean independence militarily will ultimately depend on the internal political stability in Portugal and their estimate of the strength and determination of the Azorean leadership.

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ANNEX

Soviet Military Airlift Capabilities

The Soviets have the largest number of military air transports in the world. Since the early 1960s, their military airlift operations have expanded to include the strategic airlift of troops and materiel. Moscow appears to view its military transport capability as a useful instrument for implementing political as well as military policies.

Although the Soviets are acquiring newer and heavier transports, they are still short of aircraft with the range, payload, and speed of US heavy transports.

Three organizations contribute to the military airlift capacity, actual and potential: Military Transport Aviation, one of the three major components of the Soviet air force; the General Purpose Transport Unit, a small semi-autonomous passenger-carrying unit; and in a reserve capacity the Soviet civil air carrier, Aeroflot.

Moving the Military

The primary mission of the Military Transport component is the delivery of airborne assault forces and their equipment. Much of the organization's routine activity consists of training for this wartime role. In recent years, however, the organization's peacetime responsibilities have expanded to include increasingly important secondary missions such as delivery of military equipment and economic aid material, international and domestic disaster relief, support to the Soviet space program, and resupply and replacement of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe.

Military Transport Aviation has about 750 transport aircraft. Most of them are AN-12 medium transports, but it also flies limited numbers of AN-22 and IL-76 heavy transports, based in the Moscow area, along with several types of light transports and utility aircraft.

The AN-12 is a high-wing, turboprop assault transport comparable to the US C-130. The AN-12 can carry up to 44,000 pounds about 750 nautical miles. As a troop carrier, it can accommodate either 60 paratroopers or 90 regular soldiers. The main cargo compartment of the AN-12 is not pressurized and so cannot carry passengers at high altitudes. This drawback limits its usefulness as a long-range troop carrier. Although some oxygen masks are provided, the noise and vibration in the compartment over long distance have a debilitating effect on personnel.

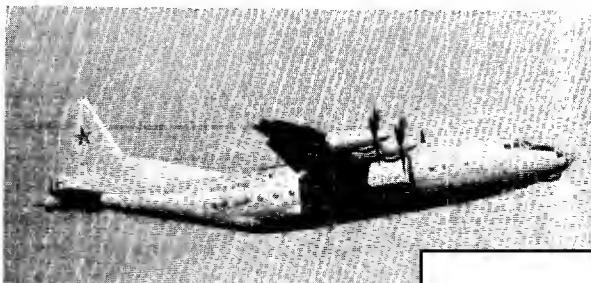
The AN-22, the Soviets' largest cargo aircraft, is a high-wing, turboprop transport. It can carry 176,000 pounds about 2,250 miles and is the primary Soviet heavy-lift aircraft. The AN-22 can carry 175 troops and has a pressurized hold,

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AN-12

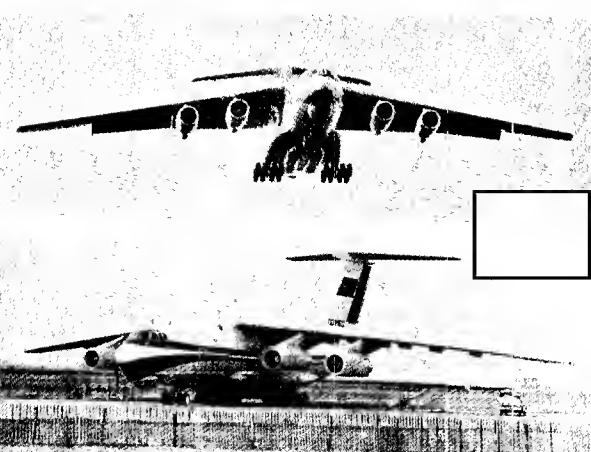
which allows the aircraft to fly at higher altitudes than the AN-12 when carrying troops. It is also the only operational Soviet transport capable of carrying bulky cargo.

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AN-22

The newest Soviet transport is the IL-76, a high-wing, jet assault transport similar to the US C-141. The IL-76 went into service last year. It can carry up to 88,000 pounds more than 2,800 miles. The IL-76 is pressurized and can carry 145 soldiers or 140 paratroopers. The IL-76 fills a gap between the AN-12 and the AN-22, and Military Transport Aviation is expected to receive more of this aircraft as the number of aging AN-12s declines and the number of the AN-22s remains essentially the same. The AN-12 and AN-22 are no longer being produced.



IL-76

The General Purpose Transport Unit is a small, passenger-carrying organization that flies high-ranking civilian and military officials and foreign dignitaries visiting the USSR. It also transports foreign military students and Soviet military advisers to and from the USSR and carries out such mundane tasks as the delivery of military mail to Soviet forces in Eastern Europe. The unit has about 60 turboprop and jet passenger aircraft of various types.

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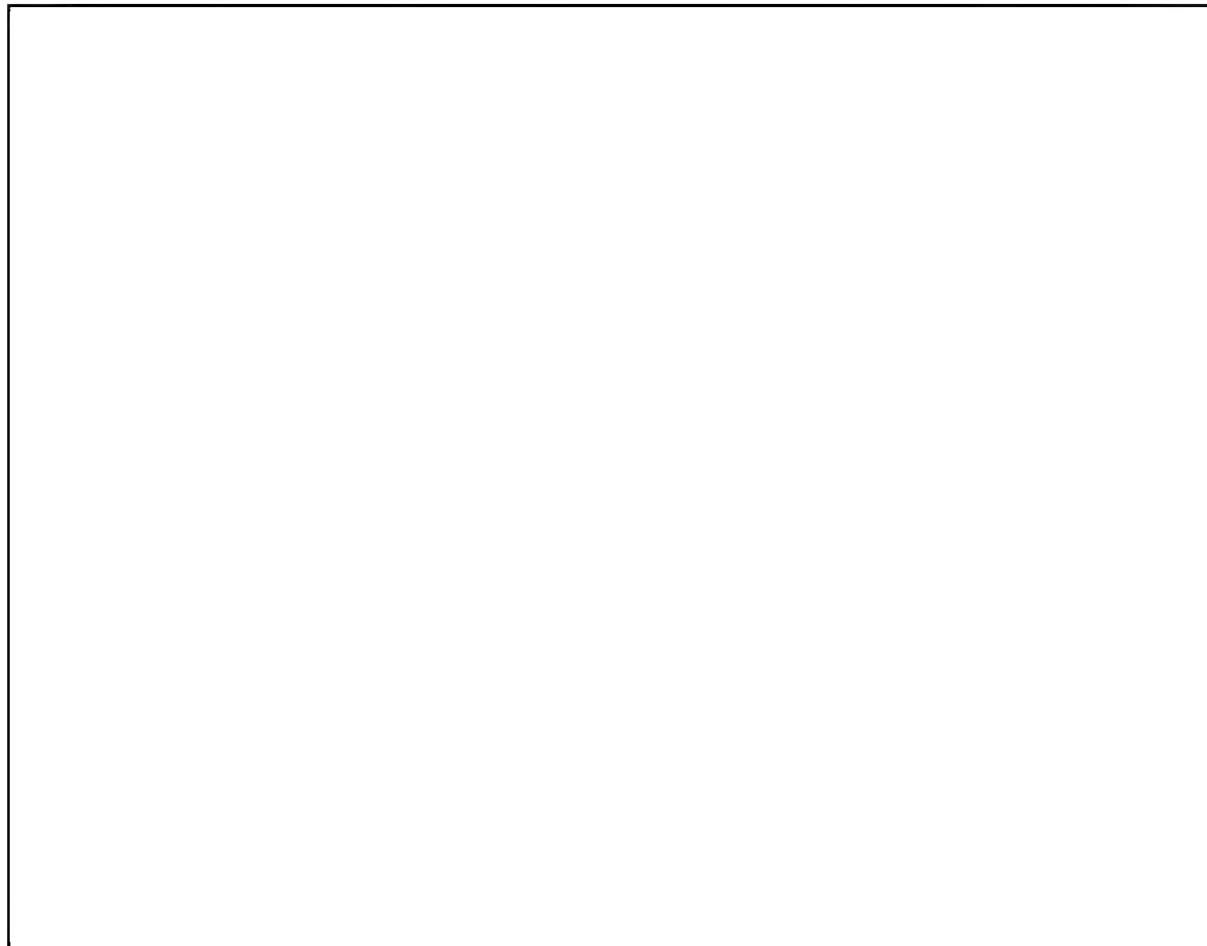
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Aeroflot, although a civil carrier, also has a military role and has taken part in military-related operations. The director of civil aviation holds a military rank and most, if not all, Aeroflot pilots are probably military reservists. Aeroflot has some 2,500 transport aircraft and would be used if the Soviets wanted to airlift large numbers of troops over appreciable distances. Military Transport Aviation and the General Purpose Transport Unit do not have enough pressurized aircraft for such a job.

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In fulfillment of its primary mission, Military Transport alone can deliver assault elements of an airborne division—6,000 men, basic combat equipment and vehicles, and minimal supplies—about 1,300 miles. In a ferrying operation to some distance—say, the Middle East—the number of troops that could be transported at any one time would largely depend on how many aircraft could be obtained from other units, such as Aeroflot.

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The Soviets are aware of their shortcomings in terms of heavy-lift capability over long distances and are attempting to gain access to Western technology on high-performance jet engines and widebody aircraft. It is doubtful, however, that the Soviets will soon be able to develop a transport aircraft that matches the range, payload, and speed of present US heavy transports.

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